



Office of the State Fire Marshal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 5, 2015

CONTACT:

Jacquelyn Reineke: (312) 485-8227

STATE FIRE MARSHAL USHERS IN FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

"Hear the Beep Where You Sleep!"

SPRINGFIELD - Yesterday marked the first day of National Fire Prevention Week, which takes place October 4-10 this year. During this week, Illinois State Fire Marshal Matt Perez urges everyone to take a moment to review their safety protocols in the event of a fire.

This year's theme, "Hear the Beep Where You Sleep. Every Bedroom Needs a Working Smoke Alarm!" points to the role of smoke detectors in dramatically reducing the tragic consequences of residential fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), half of home fire deaths—about 1,400 fatalities a year—result from fires reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., when most people are sound asleep. Three out of five home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. The combination of these two facts – late night fires without sufficient warning to escape - has deadly consequences.

"I cannot overstate the importance of having properly placed and working smoke detectors in your home," said State Fire Marshal Matt Perez. "Smoke detectors are incredibly affordable and easy to install. Take a moment this month to make sure you have one in every bedroom and on every level of your home, and that they are all working properly. They could be the difference between life and death."

The Office of the State Fire Marshal provides the following recommendations for installing and maintaining smoke alarms:

Installation

- At least one smoke alarm should be located on every level of the home, including the basement, as well as in every sleeping room and within 15 feet of each sleeping area.
- NFPA strongly recommends either installing combination smoke alarms, or both ionization and photoelectric alarms, in the home. An ionization alarm is typically more responsive to a flaming fire, such as a pan fire. A photoelectric alarm is typically more responsive to a smoldering fire, as might occur when a lit cigarette is dropped on a sofa. Combination smoke alarms have both ionization and photoelectric capabilities.
- Make sure the smoke alarm you choose carries the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

917**15

- Consider installing interconnected smoke alarms. Interconnected smoke alarms offer enhanced protection; when one sounds, they all do. This is particularly important in larger or multi-story homes, where the sound from distant smoke alarms may not be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially for sleeping individuals.
- A licensed electrician can install either hard-wired multiple-station alarms or wireless alarms, which manufacturers have more recently begun producing. An electrician can also replace existing hard-wired smoke alarms with wirelessly interconnected alarms

Maintenance and Testing

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm “chirps,” warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they’re 10 years old (or sooner) if they do not respond properly when tested.
- Change the batteries on smoke alarms at least twice a year. Daylight Savings Time can serve as a reminder to “Change your Clock, Change your Batteries.”

National Fire Prevention Week is the longest-running public health and safety observance on-record, having started with Woodrow Wilson’s 1920 proclamation of National Fire Prevention Day. This year’s Prevention Week coincides with the 144th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

For more information on fire safety and prevention, please visit OSFM’s website at sfm.illinois.gov.

###